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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

Letter
Circular
LC544

POLICY OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO
TESTS FOR AGENCIES OUTSIDE THE BUREAU

Permissible Tests Include:

1. Tests involving comparison of laboratory standards or instruments with the national standards of the Government. Tests of this character are accepted from both public and private agencies, in order to promote uniform standards throughout science and industry. The law provides that such tests shall be made gratis for Federal and State agencies. For all other agencies a fee "covering the full cost of the work" must be charged.
2. Routine tests of materials and devices to determine compliance with specifications. Such tests are made for Federal and State agencies provided funds, facilities and personnel are available. They are undertaken for other agencies only when suitable facilities are not available elsewhere. It is the policy of the Department of Commerce not to compete with qualified commercial testing laboratories.
3. Referee tests or investigations, on invitation, to settle disputes where private laboratories are unable to agree on the method of measurement, the results of tests, or the interpretation of such results, provided (1) the importance of the case justifies the time and outlay, (2) all parties agree in writing to accept and abide by the Bureau's report, and (3) the cost is borne by the parties at issue.
4. Cooperative tests the results of which are desired both by the Bureau and a cooperating agency. In many cases a research associate of the organization concerned is detailed to work with the Bureau's expert. In arriving at a charge for such tests, the Bureau's interest in the work is taken into consideration.

Non-permissible Tests

The Bureau reserves the right to decline any work temporarily or permanently if such work would delay other research or testing which is considered of more importance. (In view of the wide range of the Bureau's activities and the great variety of tests called for, such cases occur frequently.)

The following are examples of non-permissible tests:

1. Investigations of secret processes or tests of materials by such processes.
2. Tests of inadequately described materials, devices, or processes.
3. Assays, analyses, and tests to be made by methods already standard, for which private laboratories are equipped.
4. Unnecessary tests or duplication of previous work, such as further tests on a given class of material already well studied, when there is no imperative need for further information.
5. Tests, the primary object of which is sales promotion.

WASHINGTON, D. C.
February 28, 1939.